



March 14, 2014

This week's edition includes important information I want to share with you:

- **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month:** This month, Governor Bill Haslam signed a proclamation designating [March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month](#). Governor Haslam and the Tennessee disability community wishes to recognize the valuable contributions made by individuals with developmental disabilities who live, work, play, vote, volunteer, worship and build relationships in our local communities.

The proclamation states, “families of people with developmental disabilities deserve our admiration and recognition for their caring commitment and ongoing support that are essential to an independent and productive life.” Many individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members still face enormous challenges in accessing needed services and supports to allow them to live successful lives in their communities alongside people without disabilities.

We hope this month that Tennesseans will use Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month to learn how they can become involved in working alongside individuals with developmental disabilities to transform their communities into welcoming and supportive places for people of ALL abilities. Communities are stronger and better for everyone when all citizens are not only accepted but also respected for the contributions they make and their strengths, abilities and gifts. For more information about the proclamation, DD Awareness Month or the work of the Council on Developmental Disabilities, contact Executive Director Wanda Willis at 615-253-5369, Wanda.Willis@tn.gov or visit www.tn.gov/cdd.

- **Revised Quality Assurance (QA) Survey Tools:** The DIDD QA survey tools have been revised to reflect requirements in the new provider manual that becomes effective March 15, 2014. These tools are now posted on the DIDD web site [here](#). Please note the 2013 survey tools are still posted as well.

While the regional survey teams will begin to use these new tools on the provider manual effective date, we ask that providers remember some important things about upcoming surveys. First, DIDD survey methodology is based on a review of the past year of service provision. For several months following the effective date of the new manual and tools, surveyors will review provider performance using the old provider manual and those requirements that were in place during the time period being reviewed for the survey. With just a few exceptions, it is only when surveyors begin to review services provided after March 15, 2014, that they will use the new requirements. These exceptions relate to requirements that became effective on September 1, 2013 as well as changes made to Domains 2 and 8 that became effective in October 2013. Surveyors have already begun to review compliance with these requirements.

Finally, each checklist contains information about the Council on Quality and Leadership's (CQL) Personal Outcome Measures and Basic Assurances Indicators. This information has

been added to show congruence between measurements utilized by CQL and those outcomes and indicators that DIDD uses to determine provider performance. While QA surveyors will not be utilizing CQL measures for monitoring, it is important to show this information as DIDD moves forward with its accreditation efforts.

- **Dysphagia Overview Training:** An updated family version of the Dysphagia Overview training is once again available on the DIDD website [here](#). The updated version is entitled, “Eating, Chewing and Swallowing Problems.” This is a brief introduction to the challenges persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities might have when eating and drinking. It includes information on signs and symptoms of eating problems, what aspiration means, a list of high risk choking foods and precautions to take when supporting someone during eating and drinking.

In addition to the revisions made to the Dysphagia training, the Regional Therapeutic Services Teams completed a year-long statewide endeavor to update Mealtime Challenges and Challenges in Physical Management courses offered through the Regional Offices last fall. The focus for updating these courses was on maintaining consistent statewide content and materials, assuring practices were in line with current evidence-based literature and improving efficiency of the overall course. Once updates were completed last summer, the courses were piloted for several months before full implementation. These are now one-day courses and can be scheduled utilizing the [regional training calendars](#) on the DIDD website.

- **The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL):** CQL has selected the sample of provider organizations for which a Basic Assurances Self-Assessment Validation will be completed in May and June 2014. DIDD is very excited to begin working with these providers in order to collect this important information about our system so that we can move closer to becoming a true person centered service delivery system. Provider directors of the sample organizations were contacted last week and given information about the process. They will receive more information soon. Please see below the provider organizations selected to be part of the Basic Assurances Review and contact Dana.H.Scott@tn.gov if there are any questions.

West Residential, Personal Assistance and Day Providers- SRVS; West Tennessee Family Solutions; Sitters and More of West TN; Generations Community Service Corp.

Middle Residential, Personal Assistance and Day Providers- Journeys to Community Living; New Life; Advancecare Health Services; Complete Care Choices; Goodwill Industries of Middle TN; CSI-Caregiver Services of TN; Tennessee Family Solutions; Volunteer Staffing

East Residential, Personal Assistance and Day Providers- Michael Dunn Center; Cumberland Mountain Industries; Care Choices of East TN; Douglas Cooperative; Community Options; Keithcare, Inc.

Organization Serving All Three Regions- Support Solutions of the Mid-South

ISC Organizations- The Arc of Washington County; Miracles Network Agency; Neighborhood Network (West and Middle)

Ancillary Therapies Only- Nicholson Therapies

Behavior Services Only- M-Power, Inc.

- **Person Centered Practices:** People Planning Together (PPT), successfully concluded in 2013 and was nothing short of inspiring. The class was hosted in December by A Plus Care Solutions in Jackson. Those who attended the class really enjoyed developing their own Person Centered Plans and discussing dreams and goals. Participants learned more about self-advocacy, including how to advocate for support needs and attain a more person centered plan using the skill “Important To and Important For.”

We encourage any provider interested to host PPT classes. This is a two-day training class that teaches people who receive supports how to write a Person Centered Plan. Additionally, participants are empowered to be more forthcoming during planning and Circle of Support (CoS) meetings. Everyone will receive a workbook and plans created in class can assist with Individual Support Plans (ISPs) and be used in a variety of different ways.

Each person will need his or her own personal secretary to assist with reading and writing. A secretary can be anyone who knows the person (a staff person, family member or friend). An ideal class will need at least 8-10 participants. Agencies interested in hosting will need to have a training/meeting room that comfortably seats 20-24 people depending on class size. For more information or if interested in hosting a PPT class, please contact Latrese Johnson at Latrese.Johnson@tn.gov or 615-253-5657.

- **Person Centered Thinking (PCT) Tools:** Each month, a PCT tool will be highlighted in *Open Line*. This month’s focus is, “Sorting Important to/ Important for and Finding Balance Between Both.” *Important to* and *Important for* is an essential skill for Person Centered Thinking. However, differences exist between the two.

Important to, is what helps make a person happy, content and pleased.

Important for, is what’s needed to help that person stay healthy, well and safe.

What are the benefits of this tool for persons?

- Helps people get more of what is important to them without ignoring what’s important for them.
- Supports the person in ways that make sense to them.
- Identifies creative ways to support the person to be healthy and safe.
- Ensures that people supported have enriched lives.

What are the benefits of this tool for staff?

- Reinforces person centered thinking.
- Helps staff distinguish their roles and responsibilities.
- Supports an active learning culture.

- **Family Support Program Accolades:** In a recent letter to the Helen Tucker Center, the Coleman family expressed their appreciation for the Family Support Program and wished to share an excerpt:

I wanted to let you know how very much we appreciate the financial family support your center has provided Tyler Coleman this year. Since he has been attending music therapy at the Star Center, 60 miles from our home, he has begun clapping, rocking, bouncing to the beat and using instruments. He has a wonderful connection to music

that I intend to use to its fullest to help him achieve his maximum potential. We would not be able to attend these monthly sessions if not for the assistance with travel expenses.

Your program is a wonderful way to help people with disabilities and their caregivers receive the assistance they need to succeed and function as independently as possible. I am blessed to have Tyler in my life and I think others will say the same about him. He has a joyful spirit, full of smiles and laughter. I am sincerely thankful for your support of him with this wonderful program.

We're grateful the Coleman family has allowed us to share their experience and appreciate the Helen Tucker Center's tireless dedication to assisting families and people we support.

- **Employment Network:** Seats are still available for a capacity building session regarding Employment Network and Ticket to Work on April 2 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m at Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee at 937 Herman Street in Nashville (Room 121). The session will provide an overview of the Disability Employment Initiative grant, Ticket to Work and how agencies can work on implementing diversification of revenues and partnering with a workforce that has already become an Employment Network. If your agency is interested in learning more about becoming an Employment Network and Ticket to Work, please RSVP to Amy Gonzalez by March 28.
- **Greeneville Focus Group:** The next meeting is March 25 from 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. in the Greene County Skills conference room. Participants will discuss employment and Person Centered Thinking/Planning. All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP by March 21 to Chaneth.Quemore@tn.gov or jwinters@thearctn.org.
- **Star Agencies:** Congratulations to the agencies below for recently achieving star status!

★★★ *Designation:* Progressive Directions, Inc.; Compassionate Care; Chad Guffey; Goodwill Industries of Middle TN; Care Choices of East TN; Applied Behavioral Interventions; Quality Care Behavior Services

★★★★ *Designation:* Step by Step; Samantha Edwards; Nichole Bichelman; CAK; Easter Seals; Michelle Gaur; Lifestyle Nutrition; Kimberly Musicante; Victorian Dream Home
- **HIPAA Compliance Reminder:** The department would like to remind all providers and DIDD staff that Protected Health Information (PHI) should be secure when sent electronically through e-mail. Please note that at no time should the first and last name of a person supported be found in the subject line of an e-mail. Use first name and last name initial or if the first name is unique, use the first name initial and spell out the last name. If first and last names are unique, please use initials only in the subject line.

It is of utmost importance that SSNs, names, medical information and ISPs of persons supported are not linked together. To review the entire HIPAA Rule, please visit the OCR website [here](#).

Please be aware that any time PHI is not safeguarded or is shared inappropriately, sanctions may be imposed. In lieu of a secure network, an easy way to secure PHI is to password protect Word and Excel documents just like it is done when agencies send reportable incident information. For more information on password protection, please click [here](#). It is imperative users send the password in a separate e-mail. Please direct any questions to Simone Cuarino, HIPAA Compliance Director, at 615-532-6511.

- **Read Across America:** An exciting event happened for the fourth and fifth grade students at Chuckey Elementary School in Greene County during Read Across America Week! Traditionally, people in the community are invited into classrooms to read the humorous books of Dr. Seuss during that week. When the invitation came to Greene Valley, the answer was a resounding “yes!”

The invitation included a suggestion that the reader be someone who uses an assistive device to communicate as the students were studying how technology helps people with various challenges in their everyday life. Mr. Virgil Webb accepted the invitation and read *There's a Wocket in My Pocket* to the students using his Panasonic Toughbook with Speaking Dynamically Pro software. Speech pathologists Susan Greineder and Peggy Garland



accompanied Mr. Webb and after each reading session, Ms. Garland demonstrated how the Toughbook is programmed. She gave the students food for thought by asking what eight words would be important to them if those eight words were all they could speak for the rest of their lives. It quickly became obvious to the students that assistive technology is important to people who do not have traditional speech and that being able to communicate is important to everyone. The students were very attentive and several asked questions. The teachers expressed their appreciation of Mr. Webb's willingness to join in the fun and share a “teachable moment” while doing so.

- **Employment First Community of Practice Webinars:** On April 21 and May 12, presenters Thomas Macy and Nancy Gurney will begin a two-part series on organizational assessment, diversifying funding streams and collecting data to measure progress. Registration is limited to 25 participants and is on a first-come, first-serve basis. To RSVP for April 21, please contact Betty Chester at Betty.Chester@tn.gov by April 11 at 4:00 p.m. CST. To RSVP for May 12, please contact Betty by May 5 at 4:00 p.m. CST.
- **Disability Benefits and Working:** A reminder on April 15, Hope Johnson (Community Work Incentive Coordinator) will conduct a presentation that provides an overview of disability benefits including how working affects SSI and SSDI benefits. Additional topics will cover how working affects other federal benefits such as food stamps, HUD and Medicare savings programs. The session will be hosted at the Workforce in Memphis at 480 Beale Street from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Please RSVP by April 11 at 12:00 to Gary Smith at Gary.Smith@tn.gov.

Be safe and have a great weekend!

~Debbie